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# Abilities of Girls 9 to 13 in 4-H Clothing Projects

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# Abilities of Girls from 9 to 13 in 4-H Clothing Projects

THIS booklet was written to help you in your job as 4-H Club clothing leader. We hope that through the facts and principles presented here you will better understand and be able to help club members in clothing projects.

The booklet indicates the progress in growth and development of girls from 9 to 13 years of age. At the same time, it points out how uneven the progress can be in each individual.

Even though basically, no two girls are alike, they all have similar fundamental needs and motives for working at sewing and learning to select their own clothing.

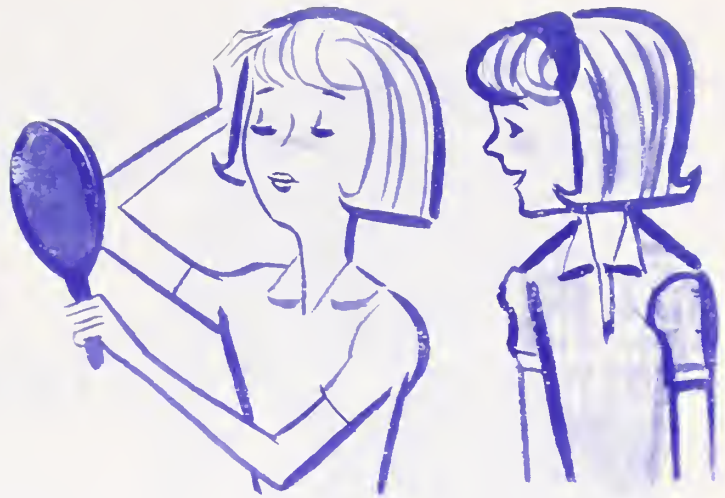
If you study these principles, you will be able to understand which skills girls this age can be expected to master, physically and psychologically. Readiness of the girl to coordinate hand and eye makes a difference in what she can successfully complete in clothing projects. This will help you guide her to utilize the 4-H clothing program in her individual growth.

The sections of the booklet on physical development, coordination, senses, and abilities point up the last section, on "What This Means to You," to show what these facts mean to you as a clothing program leader.

This publication is adapted from *Girls from 9 to 13—Their Clothing Abilities*, by Fay Moeller, Family Life Specialist, and Katherine A. Tingley, Clothing Specialist, University of Connecticut.



# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



## 9-10 YEARS OLD

This is usually a period of little growth in height for girls, although the height of a few 9 to 10-year-old girls may increase sharply.

A few girls start to put on pre-puberty weight.

The chief gain in height is in length of legs.

The arms are slow in growing.

A few 9-year-old girls begin to develop hips and a bust.

The chest begins to broaden and flatten, and the ribs change position.

Posture is often poor.

During this period there is slow, steady growth in all the physical developments that cause girls to mature ahead of boys.

## 10-11-12 YEARS OLD

At age 10, girls and boys are more nearly the same height and weight than at any other time in life.

Pre-puberty spurt of growth begins for many girls. It continues for 2-3 years.

Puberty begins for many girls at 11 or 12. The growth spurt ends soon after onset of puberty.

Between 9 and 11, growth in height may be as much as 1½ to 2 inches a year; the most rapid spurt of growth usually occurs between 10½ and 12½.

Girls of this age tend to be long-legged and rangy.

The legs grow faster than the trunk.

Skeletal muscles are growing rapidly, but lag behind growth in size.

The development of the skeleton is a good indicator of other types of physical maturity.

There is rapid eye development from farsightedness toward nearsightedness.

By 10 years of age, eyes have reached adult size.

## 12-13 YEARS OLD

At 13 years of age, girls appear to have the greatest variability of physiological development and physical size.

At the end of the "growth spurt", adult height may have been reached by a few girls.

Rapid growth of the long bones takes place; arms and legs lengthen. Fast growing girls often have difficulty adjusting to the fact that changes occur in body shape and size.

At 13, many girls begin to be taller and heavier than boys. Rate of physical development is related both positively and negatively to feelings about one's self.

The muscles grow to represent 40-45 percent of body weight.

The face may begin to develop unevenly, with the nose especially prominent.

Posture may be poor, usually due to self-consciousness, fatigue.

Pimples and excessive perspiration are apt to be disturbing.

Average age of the start of menstruation in the United States is 12.5 to 13 years.

Soon after 13, rapid growth is usually finished, and the changes of adolescence have begun to take place in practically every girl. The maturing of the sex glands is the most important single development of adolescent growth.



## COORDINATION

### *9-10-11 YEARS OLD*

Preference in the use of the hands is established early in a child's life (no effort should be made to change left-handedness in connection with the teaching of sewing skills).

Eye-hand coordination is usually well developed. (The hands are ready for crafts and shopwork, and for simple hand sewing. By 8 years of age, the child can cut paper dolls carefully and efficiently.)

Dawdling may be noticeable, especially in girls who are growing rapidly. They tend to be shy and sensitive.

Children this age are able to sit still only for short periods. "Forced" attention at one thing for too long overtaxes both muscles and nervous system.

Some girls of 10 or 11 can do close work with little nerve strain, especially when self motivated.

"Awkwardness" may be more noticeable than formerly.

Motor control differs in different situations for each girl.

Learning a skill requires much energy.

A stage of increased coordination and cooperation is beginning—not only do the individual's mind, hands, and eyes work better together, but

also children as a group can work better together.

### *11-12-13 YEARS OLD*

Skills develop best when the environment provides: practice, guidance, motivation.

During the period of fast growth, some girls may seem to have relatively poor physical coordination. Fast growers may seem awkward when compared to slow growers. Clumsiness does not just suddenly appear at this age. Motor control continues to develop, both in fine coordination and in total bodily skills. At these ages, as at all ages, large muscle control develops first.

Fine finger control is not usually accomplished at a high level until 12 years of age.

Large muscle activity is on the decline.

Many girls who are not as dexterous as their companions may feel self-conscious. When embarrassed, tense, tired, or shy, they may seem more awkward than the other girls.

A girl's assessment of herself is affected by many things: her facial features, body proportions and size, and coordination. Her idea of herself is built progressively from childhood on.



# SENSES



## 9-10-11 YEARS OLD

The eyes of a girl this age need large print—no smaller than 12-point.

At this age, reading difficulties become more noticeable.

Directions can be read and followed if they are simply stated.

In reading directions, both past experience and vocabulary are put to use. A girl with a good vocabulary does not necessarily possess skill in reading and following directions.

The primary colors are still preferred. There are wide individual differences in sensitivity to color.

This age girl has limited ability to plan ahead and organize time.

While a girl this age has some sense of time in relation to past, present, and future, she is usually not too good at planning the timing of her own tasks. She is more apt to accomplish them with last minute “blitz.”

There still may be a great urge to “feel,” taste, and smell things (such as fabric).

Grooming and clothing are directly and indirectly related to one’s “sense of self.”

Judgment, depth, and distance may be poorly developed. (These are needed in using patterns.)

## 11-12-13 YEARS OLD

There is varying ability in use of arithmetic skills (such as in figuring yardage).

The time sense of a girl this age usually has improved to the point where she begins to plan ahead and organize her time to carry out her ac-

tivities. However, she is still apt to lack time sense in terms of the actual number of days or weeks it takes to accomplish a task.

When effectively presented, “problem solving” is a challenge to girls of every age. Example: Fitting fabric on a pattern, figuring out how a pattern goes together, etc.

Ability to judge shapes, size, and design vary greatly. These are little developed in relation to “self” and dress.

Eyes better able to read finer print without strain (such as used on most patterns).

This age girl varies widely in her ability to read and follow directions.

Girls this age are more likely to choose color wisely than are boys; more boys are colorblind.

Girls have definite line and design preferences, but these may not be related to their clothing needs.

Sensitiveness to shape, size, color, texture, etc. can be developed by good teaching. (This relates to art objects, books, fabrics, etc. It is not scientifically known, as yet, how much sensitiveness can be developed in regard to choice of color, line and design for one’s self.)

Girls this age begin to have a new awareness of themselves as persons. Extremely sensitive about being “different”.

Thirteen-year-old girls are apt to start work and think of a plan later. While usually able to act promptly in an emergency, they tend to lack foresight.

Thirteen-year-old girls are often very excitable, impulsive, and moody. They easily feel hurried from outside pressure.



### *9-10-11 YEARS OLD*

Girls of this age are able to finish a job if given time, and if the job is not too complicated.

They can follow reasonable explanations. Because of wide discrepancy in ability to follow written directions, best results are obtained if a step or two in the instructions is talked over, and then demonstrated. Proceed until the instructions have been covered.

The 9-year-olds are able to assume a few definite responsibilities.

The 9- to 10-year-olds will usually cooperate, providing there is no "talking down" to them.

Some girls are capable of prolonged interest in things that appeal to them. When interested, they will make plans and go ahead on their own.

Most 9-year-old girls are able to cut and sew simple garments. They also like to knit, draw, and sketch.

These girls have high standards, but may have trouble staying with a job long enough to complete it. They need individual help to accomplish their goals.

Most girls can keep simple records but may be unable to interpret their meaning.

Girls of 10 and 11 may be more willing to practice skills than are 9-year-olds. However, skills once tried usually offer little interest unless put to some creative use.

They begin to value their work and to be critical of their own artistic products,

Many 10- and 11-year-olds are able to achieve a reasonable degree of neatness and orderliness.

Even though they may want to do well, girls

## **ABILITIES**

of this age are apt to lose interest quickly if discouraged or pressured.

Most 10- and 11-year-old girls are very active and find it hard to sit still for very long periods of time.

Some girls seem to be able to do close work with little nerve strain.

### *11-12-13 YEARS OLD*

Girls may have good "math grades," but need help to apply principles to sewing. Using a "problem solving" approach helps to improve this ability.

Some girls of 11 to 13 are able to plan the use of a small amount of money with skill. Many of them are interested in earning money.

Some girls this age will have a great deal more interest and ability in sewing than others.

Some 12 and 13-year-old girls are able to do very complicated tasks; others seem to be unable to do anything but the most simple jobs.

Most girls between the ages of 9 and 13 are able to assume responsibility for caring for some of their clothes, such as shining shoes, washing socks and underwear, and ironing simple clothes.

A girl usually finds it much easier to pick out becoming line and design of clothing for others than for herself.

The girl who has reached puberty often is doubtful of her own ability with regard to the proper things to do, say, and wear. Blushing, stammering, and trembling are common.



## WHAT THESE FACTS MEAN TO YOU AS A LEADER



The girls in your group have a compelling need to be like the others.

They will differ in their need to belong to a group:

A clothing project for most girls this age should require only a short time to complete.

Adolescent girls are interested in the physical changes occurring in their bodies.

Girls should not be compelled to achieve a standard of perfection for which they have neither the maturity nor the background.

Written directions should be simple and printed in large type—at least 12 point.

Most girls 9 to 11 can learn to run a sewing machine more easily than they can learn to do fine hand sewing. Girls in this age group should be expected to do a minimum of fine hand sewing.

You can encourage creative learning through individual activities.

Most girls 9 to 11 have the ability to select a few articles of clothing by themselves, such as socks, hair ribbons, etc. If they have had wise guidance, this ability usually increases by the time they reach 13.

Choosing a pattern and fabric with color and texture suited to the girl's coloring, size, personality, and use requires guidance by the adult. (However, a leader should not necessarily expect a girl this age to agree with her, or accept her suggestions.)

Awkwardness may prevent a girl from doing things for herself that she wants to do.

To influence attitudes, indirect teaching is

more successful than a direct "do it this way".

Approval from one's family, as well as group approval, is very important at these ages.

Records help girls organize what they have learned and evaluate their progress.

Girls enjoy activities in which they can see self-improvement.

You should demonstrate steps in sewing directions: laying the pattern, cutting, marking centers, locating front and back, placing pockets, etc.

Supervise the girls while they repeat the steps in the demonstration.

It usually works well to let the girls assume responsibility for certain processes, with the leader assuming responsibility for others. An example might be: a girl threads the needle after the leader has threaded the sewing machine. (However, a leader should not expect a 9 or 10-year-old girl to thread the needle every time it comes unthreaded.)

Properly supervised, most girls 9 to 13 can learn to appraise their own work.

Because of the many differences among girls 9 to 13 years of age, it is better to group the girls according to their degree of skill; each group can then progress at its own rate.

You should help each member set a pace for herself which provides quality work without strain.

There are many "abilities" needed in making a garment. One should not be "over prized" to the exclusion of others.

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